Charlie Foxtrot Standard Operating Procedures

Fireteam Lead

Contents

1. Fireteam lead

Fireteam leading is a difficult training to tackle. It requires concentration, situational awareness, confidence and a solid understanding of our tactics and training. Most of all, however, it requires practical experience. This document will lay out all the theoretical and practical information we have gathered from multiple sources over the course of years of fireteam leading in Arma 2 and 3. It is a great starting point for any aspiring leader, but it does require you to get out there and lead a fireteam yourself. You will make mistakes, but as long as you learn from them, you will get better.

Requirements for FTL training:

- Basic infantry
- Advanced infantry
- MOUT
- Basic comms

A. The role of a fireteam lead

1. Setting the tone
Before we get into the nitty gritty of being an FTL, we have to talk about setting "the tone". This can be defined as the general mood or atmosphere within the session. For our tactics to work and for you to be an effective fireteam lead, the tone has to be serious. We sometimes refer to it as "game faces". Everyone stops joking around and focuses on playing the game. As the leader of your group, you are responsible for setting and maintaining the tone. If one of your team members starts cracking jokes when it's inappropriate (e.g. you are about to make contact with the enemy), you have to call them on it and get them to focus. If you can't get them to shut up and take the game seriously, report it to the admins. We don't tolerate players who don't respect their team lead.

2. Enforcing tactics and procedures
Your team mates will often forget or choose not to properly execute a certain tactic or procedure, which can put their or others' lives at risk. As a fireteam lead, it is your job make sure they adhere to our standard of play. Make sure you are fully up to date on all relevant trainings, because you are the role model for the average player.

3. Autonomy
Styles of squad leading vary from person to person, but as a fireteam lead you can expect a certain level of autonomy. Don't expect your squad leader to micromanage you. He will tell you to clear a building or move to a certain position and it's up to you to figure out the best way to do it. This doesn't take away the fact that you can still call up your squad leader if you don't know how to best carry out their orders.

4. Keep the game fun

At the end of the day we're all still playing a game. It's important that you keep everyone focused and playing the game up to our standards, but it's equally important that it's a fun experience for everyone. On one hand this means playing a style of Arma that is more than just sitting on a hilltop plinking away at enemies. We don't just use fire and manoeuvre tactics because they're effective, but also because they're fun. Be dynamic, not static. On the other hand you should balance out the aforementioned seriousness with some levity. Set the example of when banter is appropriate. Tell jokes during a long car ride, or when we're waiting on something or someone. You might make some friends along the way.

B. Equipment

This section will describe the equipment you will have at your disposal as a fireteam lead and how to use it to its maximum effect.

1. Binoculars

Every fireteam has two sets of binoculars. The fireteam lead and the assistant automatic rifleman each have one. It is important to use them sparingly. You don't want to spend an entire firefight with your binoculars out when you could be laying down fire instead. Remember that you are one of four rifles in your team. If you're within 300 metres, you should be firing instead of watching.

2. Smoke grenades

Smoke grenades are an extremely useful tool when used right. You have eight smoke grenades spread out over your fireteam. Make sure to use them.

Their main purpose is to break line of sight between you and your enemy. This causes the enemy's fire to become less accurate or even stop, which allows you to make an aggressive move, or fall back.

Smoke positioning is very important. The closer the smoke grenade lands to the enemy, the more it will obscure their view, but the easier it will be for them to reposition to see past the smoke. This principle also applies to your team, so it is generally ill-advised to throw a smoke grenade right on top of yourself. Throw it in the enemies' direction instead.

Wind direction and strength will heavily influence how useful your smoke is. Stronger winds will mean a longer, lower smoke screen. Always take note of the wind direction to position your smokes appropriately.

If you ever need an emergency smoke screen, call out: "TEAM NAME, pop smoke to the DIRECTION OF ENEMY FIRE".

3. Grenade launcher

The under barrel grenade launcher can be a very useful weapon when used appropriately. You have two types of grenades to fire.

First, you have HE (high explosive) grenades. These are useful for indirect fire to hit targets you can't see, killing groups of enemies, destroying or damaging vehicles, etc. Because of their destructive nature, you have to be very careful when using them. Make sure there are no friendly or civilian units close to your target.

Second, you have smoke grenades (white, red, green). These can be useful to to create smoke cover at long range and mark enemy (red) or friendly (green) positions.

4. AT launcher

Every fireteam has an unguided anti-tank launcher with one rocket. Its effective range is about 300-400 metres depending on the launcher itself. Its primary use is to destroy vehicles (particularly armoured vehicles), but it can also be used to destroy buildings or blow holes in walls (breaching) to create alternative entry points.

If you hear or see a vehicle approaching that's worthy of being blown up with your AT launcher, call out: "Ready AT". Don't leave your rifleman in this state too long, though. He won't be able to fire his rifle and you risk him blowing up your entire team if he's not careful. Always make sure the appropriate backblast procedure is used to prevent accidental injuries.

5. Light machine guns and guiding fire

The automatic rifleman (AR) is probably the most important member of your team besides yourself. He puts down a large volume of fire and can do so at up to 600 metres. It is very important to always put your AR in the best position to engage enemies in order to get maximum value out of his machine gun.

At longer ranges, it is important to guide the fire of your machine gunner. This is where your binoculars become very useful, because you yourself cannot effectively engage enemies beyond 300 metres. Watch for the tracers and the impacts of your AR's fire and correct appropriately using UP, DOWN, LEFT, or RIGHT followed by the number of metres that your AR should adjust for in order to hit the target. For example, if your machine gunner's fire is landing five metres below and two metres left of the target, you would say: "up five, right two".

C. Communication

Communication within a squad is very important. It provides situational awareness for everyone involved which leads to better decision making. Know where all friendly elements are and what they are doing. You're not just limited to communication with your squad leader. You can and should coordinate with other fireteams when necessary.

Furthermore, the fireteam lead is the relay between your team members and other leaders. Other members of the fireteam have no business on the radio, unless you are dead. The communication from a fireteam should come from one source only.

Finally, always keep your squad lead up to date on what you're doing. This doesn't mean you should be radioing in every five seconds, but if you're starting an attack or you have completed an order, let squad lead know.

D. Infantry tactics

This is the most important section of this training document. You will spend most of your team on foot as a fireteam leader and as such you need to be able to apply all concepts mentioned below. They will keep your team alive.

1. General orders

There are the orders you will be using pretty much every couple of minutes

360 coverage
"Watch your sectors" or "360" are the most common call-outs. The goal here is to have every team member cover a 90° angle so that you are never caught out by flanking enemies. Your team will forget and want to look forwards where the enemies are. If you don't need them to shoot, make them watch their sectors. The general set-up (as mentioned in basic infantry) is:
- Fireteam lead – front
- Automatic rifleman – right
- Assistant automatic rifleman – left
- Rifleman (AT) – rear

You can modify this setup depending on where hostiles are most likely to come from. For example, if you expect enemies from the left, you can put the AR there instead.

Move/hold
"Moving" or "Moving out", and "Hold", "Holding" are the most common call-outs. Because your team mates are diligently watching their sectors, they can't always tell when the team starts or stops moving. Therefore, you should always let your team know when you're holding or moving.

Cover
"Grab cover", "Grab a tree", "Get in cover", etc. are the most used call-outs. You'd be surprised how often people don't get in cover because they want to get kills. Staying alive is usually more important than getting cover (with the exception of the contact drill). Watch your team members and call them out individually if you have to. You can save many lives if you consistently make your team members seek cover.

Spacing
"Watch your spacing", "Spread out", etc. are the most used call-outs. Again, this is easily forgotten by people, but it is very important. You avoid getting everyone killed by a grenade, but you also avoid everyone getting mowed down with one machine gun burst. Appropriate spread is 5-10 metres between each team member.

Weapons up/down
"Weapons up" and "weapons down" are the appropriate call-outs. Weapons down is used in situations where you don't expect contact, because it consumes less stamina. Weapons up is used when contact is likely.

<u>Formations</u>
These have been discussed in basic infantry, but we'll discuss them from a fireteam lead's point of view here.

The **column** is the most used formation, because it is dead simple to use.
- Purpose
    - Travel in safe areas
    - Travel in difficult terrain
- Appropriate speeds: walking - combat pace – jogging - sprinting

The **wedge** is very useful, because it provides good firing lines in all directions, but it is difficult to maneuver with.
- Purpose:
    - When expecting contact, assaulting a position
- Appropriate speeds: walking – combat pace – jogging

The **line** is a very specific formation that should only be used in specific situations. It has great firing capabilities towards the front, but poor 360 coverage.
- Purpose:
    - Assaulting a hilltop
    - Engaging enemies
- Appropriate speeds: walking

Forests are an exception. You can and should still order formations within forests, but it is far more important that your team members move from tree to tree. This will make them harder to hit and spot. An exception to this exception is if you have to move quickly through the forest.

While holding, you should apply the general principle that cover is more important than a perfect formation. If a team member can move five to 10 metres in order to get behind a rock or a tree, make them.

2. Buddy teams

As explained in basic infantry, the fireteam is further divided into two buddy teams: Red (FTL + Rifleman) and Blue (AR + AAR). The reasoning behind this is that you put the most and least experienced team member together and the AR with the AAR. Always appoint a buddy team leader. He'll be in charge of executing your orders and communicating with you. You want one clear voice to communicate with, rather than two disjointed ones.

Buddy teams are extremely useful for splitting up the team. You can quickly clear two houses by splitting up, or have the two teams cover separate corners in a MOUT situation. They really come into play when you start using bounding overwatch.

3. Buddy team bounding

As explained in advanced infantry, bounding overwatch is a fire and manoeuvre tactic in order to move while under fire. It can be used within a team (buddy team bounding) or between teams (fireteam bounding). This section will discuss buddy team bounding.

"Bounding overwatch, blue move north" or "Blue, bound north" are the most common call-outs. When bounding with suppressive fire, make sure to keep your bounds short (30 metres at most). Bounds that take too long will no longer be covered by suppressive fire. You've got 30 seconds at most, considering a rate of fire of 1 round per second and a 30 round magazine. If your second buddy teams makes bounds that are too long, call them out on it the next time you bound past them. Avoid using the radio for "moving" and "set" calls, because an entire squad relies on the same short range radio channel. To end bounding overwatch, call out for your team to "regroup on me".
When bounding without suppressive fire, the maximum distance increases (~50-75 metres), because you're not bound by the 30-second rule.

4. Fireteam bounding

Fireteam bounding works mostly the same as buddy team bounding. The main differences are as follows. Bounding occurs between fireteams, rather than between buddy teams and bounding distances are increased from 25-30 metres, to 50-60 metres (up to 100 metres if not under fire). In order to achieve this increased distance, firing rate should be lowered and it becomes more important to find cover in the environment. This is compensated by having double the amount of rifles you'd have in buddy team bounding. "Set" and "moving" calls should be done over the short range radio. Finally, if the squad leader decides to bound all 3 fireteams together, two of the fireteams will be grouped together (typically 1 and 2).

The primary advantage of fireteam bounding is the increased distance between bounds. This means less team is wasted stopping and starting movement, which means faster movement overall. If large distances need to be crossed with bounding, fireteam bounding becomes more attractive. Other advantages are the ability to provide 360° coverage while bounding, and having more opportunities to take cover. Downsides are the need of a radio, and fireteam members sometimes needing to reload due to not lowering their rate of fire.

Fireteam bounding is called out in the following way: "***TEAMS TO BOUND*, fireteam bounding to *DESTINATION/DIRECTION*, *TEAM X* move.**" Example: "Alpha 1, 2, fireteam bounding to the northeast, 1 move".

If all three teams are involved, the call for which team to move first will make clear which teams will be grouped together. Example: "Alpha 1, 2, and 3, fireteam bounding to the northeast, 1 move". This means Alpha 2 and 3 are grouped together.

5. Squad formations

Much like fireteams, squads can be formed up in multiple formations. We use the same three formations.

The **column** is the most used squad formation, because it is very easy to use. It's generally used to travel long distances. In a full squad, the default order of movement in a column is 1 – 2 – Lead – 3. This keeps the lead element sufficiently in the back, while still its rear sector is still covered by a third fireteam.

The **wedge** is primarily useful when the squad expects contact soon. The three fireteams form a wedge as expected, but the lead element will be in the middle of the wedge, rather than on the flanks.

The **line** can be used to initiate contact when enemies are unaware, or in order to clear large hilltops. The three fireteams again form a line as expected, but the lead element will be behind the line.

Sector coverage has an extra added layer in squad formations. Each fireteam should focus extra on the same sector that a team member would focus on in the same fireteam formation. For example in a squad column, fireteam 2 would focus extra on the right flank. This manifests itself with the fireteam leader focusing his attention more on that sector.

6. Hilltop clearing

Clearing hilltops can very dangerous. The combination of short sightlines and lack of cover can prove deadly. In order to minimize the risk, the line formation is used. This forces the fireteam to move slowly, and causes all fireteam members to crest the hilltop at the same time. Make sure the fireteam members on the flank look sufficiently to the left and right. You're aiming for close to 180° coverage, rather than 90°.

7. ERP – Emergency Rendezvous Point

ERPs are defined by squad leaders as part of an overall plan. They are places to retreat to and regroup with the rest of your squad. Your squad leader might give you the command to retreat to an ERP, or you might retreat there of your own accord if you lose radio communications with the squad.

8. OP – Observation Point

OPs are defined by the squad leader as part of an overall plan. They are generally safer positions from where the squad can perform recon, like hilltops. They are numbered in ascending fashion, starting at 1. Consider the positioning of an OP marker as a guideline. Find the best position within ~50 metres, rather than stopping right on the marker.

9. AP – Attacking Point

Aps are defined by squad leaders as part of an overall plan. They are more dangerous positions from where fireteams engage hostile forces, generally with some form of cover nearby. They are numbered in ascending fashion, starting at 1. Consider the positioning of an AP marker as a guideline. Find the best position within ~50 metres, rather than stopping right on the marker.

10. Overwatch

Overwatch is a simplified version of the fireteam tactic 'bounding overwatch'. Only one of the two elements will move, while the other sets up in a position that has adequate cover and line of sight towards potential threats. Generally these positions will be hills, treelines, or buildings. Overwatch can be executed both with and without suppressive fire.

 The covering element should ideally have weaponry that can be used over long distances, like machine guns and marksman/sniper rifles. This tactic is useful for crossing large open distances when having access to aforementioned weaponry, which makes it ideal at a squad level with support elements (humvees, MMG teams, etc.).

11. Flanking

Flanking can be a very efficient tactic for a fireteam to utilize, because of its ability to effectively neutralize the cover an enemy might have, while also catching them by surprise. It requires proper setup and good reading of the terrain, because a flanking move can leave your own fireteam in a vulnerable position instead. On a squad level, flanking moves can happen in two ways.

The first option would be during a close range firefight (e.g. after a 'contact' procedure), where squad lead will ask one or more teams to flank in a certain cardinal direction while the other teams hold their position to distract the enemy. This will prompt the fireteam leader to first break contact with the enemy and move in the direction squad lead has asked of them. The idea is to stay out sight of the enemy, until you've achieved close to a 90° angle to the direction your enemy is facing, at which point your fireteam will pop up and engage them. To

achieve this you'll need to move 50-100 metres in the direction squad lead has asked you to flank, making use of the available terrain to hide yourself from view and finding a position with cover if possible.

Squad leaders will call for this form of flanking in the following way: "***TEAMS TO FLANK*, flank *DIRECTION.**"

The second option is much simpler, where squad lead will mark a position on your map (usually an 'Attacking Point') which will hopefully put you in a flanking position. The principles of staying out of view while flanking and finding a position with cover when opening fire remain the same here.

The keys to a good flank are as follow:
1. The base of fire should be sizeable enough that it can hold off the enemy long enough for the flank to be executed.
2. The flank should happen quickly, so that the base of fire doesn't get overrun.
3. The flank shouldn't be spotted before it can be executed, as it gives the enemy time to find cover against it.
4. The enemy positions shouldn't have easily accessible cover that can be taken up against the flanking position.

If you happen to be part of the base of fire in a flanking manoeuvre, take note of where friendly forces are flanking to, so that you don't engage them by accident.

12.   Suppressive fire

As mentioned in Basic Infantry, suppressive fire is used extensively in our tactics, as the mods we use make it effective against the AI. It will make them seek cover and cease fire themselves, which improves your chances of survival. However, it's important to get suppressive fire as close as possible to the enemies for maximum effect. Try to pinpoint where the enemy is shooting from and return fire in that direction.

Your fireteam members will often be reluctant to fire if they don't see enemies, which means you will have to make them. Call out: "**Suppressive fire to the *DIRECTION/LANDMARK***". Additionally calling out things like "**Start shooting!**" can often be enough to get them firing off rounds. A rule of thumb is to have every man with a rifle fire off one round per second. For machine guns, this ends up being one three-round burst per second.

13. Injuries and medical emergencies

In any given mission, it's quite likely one or more of your fireteam members will get shot, which means you'll need to know how to deal with that. The first step is to find out they've been shot. Checking regularly during a firefight if anyone is wounded by asking: "**Is anyone wounded?**", by checking your shacktac hud and by looking at your team members directly is crucial to sniffing out injuries and dealing with them. We can differentiate injuries into three categories: critical, non-critical, and movement impairing injuries:

Critical injuries are those where your team member's life is in grave danger within the coming minutes. Good indicators are multiple large, heavily bleeding wounds and loss of consciousness. Your first priority should be to bring the injured member to a safe position, usually behind hard cover. You might have to drag or carry the person to this location. Then, you should stabilize him as best as possible by making use of bandages and tourniquets as needed. At this point you should assess if you are capable of stabilizing the patient without the help of a medic. If the answer is no, you should immediately contact your squad leader, letting him know you urgently need a medic and that the wounded member is in a safe location, and where that location is (usually "at my location" is sufficient). If you are capable of stabilizing him yourself, do so and refer to the 'non-critical injuries section' on what to do next.

Non-critical injuries are those where your team member's life is not in grave danger in the coming minutes. They might have taken one or a couple of small or average wounds and are not unconscious for an extended duration of time. Order the relevant team member to find cover and bandage/tourniquet themselves as quickly as possible. Use smoke if no cover is available. An exception to this is something like bounding overwatch or other situations where fast movement is critical. If the injury is light enough and not movement impairing, they should ignore it and keep moving. Make sure to deal with the injury appropriately when the situation makes this possible. You should inform your squad leader when team members sustain non-critical injuries, however you should not call for a medic until the firefight has died down or the manoeuvre has ended at which point your injured team member(s) can move to a safe location indicated by squad lead, where they will be treated. The medic should **never** have to risk his life to heal non-critical injuries.

Movement impairing injuries are injuries to the legs that prevent a soldier from moving faster than walking pace. They generally follow the same rules as non-critical injuries (see above), but they are slightly higher priority, because they will slow down the entire squad. In a situation where a team member has sustain a movement impairing injury while moving fast is critical, have someone else carry the injured team member to safety, while informing your squad leader that one of your team members cannot run. Refer to non-critical injuries section for further steps.

E. MOUT

We won't be discussing fireteam leading in urban terrain here in depth, considering the MOUT training document covers that. The unique thing about MOUT from a fireteam leader's perspective is that you won't always be up front. This means every fireteam member is expected to know how and when to use all MOUT procedures, however in reality not everyone will. Make sure to take charge of your fireteam and tell the point man what to do if you notice he's hesitating. There are, however, a couple of things you'll still be in charge of that are worth discussing.

1. Speed of movement
As you set of, define the speed of movement by declaring out loud whether it's a slow move or a quick move. A slow move means the point man changes with every procedure (see "MOUT SOPs"), whereas a quick move keeps you fully in charge as point man.

2. Direction of movement
Before the usual changes of point man in our MOUT procedures happen, your team needs to know where to go. Use simple instructions like landmarks and cardinal directions, don't resort to map markers.

3. Compound clearing
As described in the MOUT SOPs, compound clearing generally starts with a 180° slice, followed by each buddy team clearing half of the compound (left and right respectively). Make you tell each buddy team whether they'll be going left or right before entering.

4. Split column
Your main priority here is to make sure your team stays level with the team on the other side of the street. Either make your team slow down, or ask the other team to slow down. Trying to get either team to speed up will only lead to more mistakes.

F. Vehicle tactics

As of writing no formal vehicle training guide has been written. However, as an FTL there are some concepts you need to understand and apply in order to make the most out of vehicles. They can be both a blessing by providing a lot of firepower and a curse by limiting your maneuverability. This section will discuss situations in which your fireteam controls a vehicle (Humvees, MRAPs, etc.) as well as situations in which your team will work alongside a vehicle controlled by another element (APCs, tanks, etc.).

1. Entering vehicles

By default every fireteam member has a set position within your typical wheeled vehicle. In unarmed vehicles the rifleman (AT) drives the vehicle, while the fireteam leader sits in the front passenger seat. If the vehicle is armed, the assistant automatic rifleman (AAR) will man the gun. The logic behind this setup is that you have the junior member drive the vehicle with the fireteam leader up front with a clear view of the road to navigate. The assistant automatic rifleman gets to man the gun, so that your automatic rifleman (AR) is free to use his LMG, maximizing your firepower. You can override this setup if you like, but make sure you have a good reason for doing so.

Finally, make sure to always enter your vehicle last, so that you can verify your team members are inside. This is especially important when you enter a vehicle you don't control. In this case make sure to call out "***YOUR CALLSIGN*, all in.**", so that the crew and squad lead know that your fireteam is in. Some vehicles, particularly APCs and helicopters , require you to do this over the radio. There is no need to establish communications first in this case.

2. Exiting vehicles

There are two ways to exit a vehicle. Either everyone gets out, or the driver (and gunner) stay in. So make sure to either call: "**Everybody out/everybody dismount**" or **"Dismount, driver and gunner stay in"**, so that your team knows who is leaving the vehicle.

To prevent injuries, always make sure the vehicle is completely stationary before you order anyone to get out of the vehicle.

3. Speed of movement

Vehicles have three speeds: slow, normal, and fast. Make sure you know what speed you're supposed to be using and tell the driver which speed you want him to maintain.

4. Navigating

Navigating is something you'll be doing a lot in vehicles, primarily if your vehicle is on point in a convoy or when your vehicle is driving off on its own. Before setting off, have a look at the waypoints squad lead has set up and understand where you're supposed to stop and/or dismount. Try to visualize how you're going to drive the route and where the turns are.

Generally the biggest challenges will be getting your vehicle onto a road and the turns you'll have to make on or off those roads. Alternate between having the map open and looking through the windshield to determine where you are and when to give instructions for a turn. You'll want to give instructions well in advance, at least 100 metres before a turn, repeating those same instructions when your vehicle arrives at the turn. Highlight possible landmarks and explain where the driver is supposed to go next, either in the form of turning left/right, or by using cardinal directions. In the case of going off road, it can help to use "on my mark" when explain the instructions and calling out "mark" when the turning position is reached. A couple of examples:

Example 1:

"T-intersection coming up in 200 metres where we'll turn right."
…
"Turn right here".

Example 2:

"On my mark we are turning straight north off road."
…
"Mark, go straight north."

5. Vehicle spacing

Just like in infantry tactics, spacing is very important for convoys. We tend to maintain 25 – 50 metres worth of spacing between each vehicle, both to avoid explosives damaging multiple vehicles, and to prevent friendlies crashing into each other.

6. Guiding vehicle fire

See "Light machine guns and guiding fire" earlier in this document.

7. Screening a vehicle

Screening a vehicle means putting friendly infantry units around a vehicle in order to compensate for the slow turning speed of a vehicle's turret and its limited field of view to keep it safe from close range attacks. This is primarily done in forests and urban terrain. The goal is to have your team members close enough that they can cover the vehicle, while also not getting hit when the screened vehicle gets hit by explosives.

When screening your own vehicle, unload everyone but the driver and gunner. You'll usually be in a squad when doing this, so position the friendly team members in positions where the vehicle requires the most cover. If you're on point, this means in front. If you're in the middle this means on the sides. If you're in the back, this means in the rear. Put your people on either side of the roads, 10-15 metres ahead or behind of the vehicle, or right next to them if you're in the middle of a convoy.

When screening another element's vehicle, form a rectangle around the vehicle with all available elements. If it's just you, this means one fireteam member on each corner. If there are two elements, then one element will cover the front and another will cover the rear.